

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 TRSE-00 ACDA-07 IO-13 /076 W

-----030944Z 051166 /15

P R 030902Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4299

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, KS

SUBJECT: SIXTEEN "INDEPENDENT" CANDIDATES TO RUN IN JUNE 10
BY -ELECTION

REF: A. SEOUL 3402 (260801Z APR 77), B. SEOUL 4330 (240803Z
MAY 77)

SUMMARY: SIXTEEN CANDIDATES, SIX OF WHOM ARE CONSIDERED
SERIOUS CONTENDERS, ARE SLATED TO RUN JUNE 10 IN CHONGNO-
CHUNG BY-ELECTION, FIRST ELECTION HELD IN ROK SINCE FEBRUARY
1973. CHUNG IL-HYONG'S SON IS LEADING CONTENDER. PRESS STILL
CONTINUES TO SCOLD DRP AND NDP FOR NOT RUNNING CANDIDATES
BUT EVEN THOUGH MAJOR PARTIES NOT INVOLVED, ELECTION WILL BE
READ CLOSELY FOR POLITICAL SIGNS AND PORTENTS. END SUMMARY.

1. OF SIXTEEN CANDIDATES FORMALLY ENTERED IN UPCOMING JUNE
10 BY-ELECTION, TWO ARE FORMER NATIONAL ASSEMBLYMEN, TWO ARE
PAST AND PRESENT STUDENT LEADERS, THREE ARE
BUSINESSMEN INCLUDING ONE WON-TON SALESMAN WHO STILL
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DELIVERS HIS MERCHANDISE BY CART; TWO WERE EDUCATED IN
U.S. AND AT LEAST ONE IN JAPAN; AND ONE WOMAN RUNNING,
HAN SANG-PIL, IS A MINOR OPPOSITION FIGURE. OF -MAJOR"
OPPOSITION FIGURES IN RACE, ONE IS SON OF MYONGDONG
DEFENDANT CHONG IL-HYONG AND OTHER IS SON OF "DEAN" OF
MYONGDONG DEFENSE CORPS. THERE ARE TWO SERIOUS GOVERNMENT
ASSOCIATED CANDIDATES. SIX, BRIEFLY REVIEWED BELOW, ARE

CONSIDERED SERIOUS CANDIDATES BY MOST OBSERVERS AND PRESS.

2. CHONG IL-HONG STRONGLY OPPOSED NDP ENTERING ANY CANDIDATE IN BY-ELECTION RACE, APPARENTLY QUITE SINCERELY BECAUSE OF SEVERE CAMPAIGN RESTRICTIONS. CHONG EVEN THREATENED TO DISBAND HIS DISTRICT PARTY APPARATUS. DESPITE THIS, HIS SON CHONG TAE-CHAL IS AN ANNOUNCED AND FAVORED INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE AT THIS POINT TO WIN ONE SEAT AND CHONG SENIOR IS USING HIS DISTRICT PARTY APPARATUS TO HELP HIM. NO ONE KNOWS WHY CHONG REVERSED HIMSELF BUT IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED HIS WIFE, MYONGDONG DEFENDANT YI TAE-YONG, MAY HAVE INFLUENCED HIM. CHONG JR, 33, REPORTEDLY IS SEEKING "JUDGMENT OF PEOPLE ON HIS FATHER'S TRIAL." ANOTHER FAIRLY PROMINENT CANDIDATE IS KANG KUN-HO, FORMER NDP ASSEMBLYMAN, AND ONE OF THIRTEEN OPPOSITION FIGURES ALLEGEDLY TORTURED BY KCIA WHO SURFACED TO TELL HIS TALE IN WAKE OF RELEASE OF EMERGENCY MEASURE ONE THROUGH FOUR PRISONERS. THIRD CANDIDATE, PAK CHUNG-HUN IS SON OF SENIOR FIGURE ON MYONGDONG DEFENSE TEAM, WHO RAN AND LOST IN 1973 ASSEMBLY ELECTION. FOURTH OPPOSITION CANDIDATE IS SIN IN-U WHO HAS BEEN ELECTED TO ASSEMBLY TWICE, IN 5TH AND 6TH SESSIONS.

3. INDEPENDENT PAK IN-KAK HAS STRONG PRO-GOVERNMENT TIES. HE IS LONGTIME ASSOCIATE OF LATE HANKUK ILBO PRESIDENT CHANG KI-YONG, AND IS THREE-TIME LOSER IN RACES FOR AN ASSEMBLY SEAT. CHANG HIMSELF EVENTUALLY DECIDED TO RUN IN PAK'S STEAD, WON BUT DIED IN 1977, THEREBY FORCING ROKG TO HOLD BY-ELECTION FOR TWO VACANT SEATS. OTHER SERIOUS, MODERATELY PRO-GOVERNMENT CANDIDATE IS O CHAE-TO, NOTED ANTI-COMMUNIST, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WHO SERVED AS PUBLIC PROSECUTOR DURING PRESIDENT SYNGMAN RHEE'S TIME. MOST OBSERVERS PREDICT THAT REMAINING TEN CANDIDATES HAVE LITTLE CHANCE OF WINNING EITHER SEAT BUT FORMAL CAMPAIGN IS JUST BEGINNING.

4. PRIME MINISTER CHOE KYU-HA HAS CALLED FOR "FAIR ATMOSPHERE" IN CAMPAIGN; IN HIS WORDS, "NO VIOLENCE, NO BRIBERY AND NO FEASTING." VIOLATIONS WILL BE STRICTLY PUNISHED. OBSERVERS NOTE THERE IS LITTLE CHANCE OF SUCH VIOLATIONS AND EVEN LESS CHANCE OF OLD-FASHIONED GRASS ROOTS CAMPAIGNING. CANDIDATES MAY DO ABSOLUTELY NO CAMPAIGNING OF ANY KIND OUTSIDE FOUR FORMAL APPEARANCES BEGINNING JUNE 3RD AND ENDING JUNE 7. THESE FOUR MEETINGS WILL OCCUR IN REASONABLY CONVENIENT LOCATIONS THROUGH COMBINED DISTRICTS BUT VOTER, TO ENLIGHTEN HIMSELF, MUST ATTEND ONE OF FOUR SIX-HOUR SESSIONS AT WHICH CANDIDATE IS PERMITTED TO SPEAK 20 MINUTES ONLY. THIS TIME FRAME HAS BEEN SUBJECT OF SOME CONTROVERSY AS CAMPAIGN LAW ALLOWS THIRTY MINUTES BUT SHEER NUMBER OF CANDIDATES HAS CAUSED CENTRAL

ELECTIONS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (CEMC) TO SUGGEST REDUCTION OF TOTAL SPEAKING TIME. CEMC HAS POSTED CAMPAIGN INFORMATION INCLUDING CANDIDATES' PHOTOGRAPHS AND BRIEF BIOGRAPHIES ALL OVER CHONGNO AREA IN WHICH EMBASSY LOCATED.

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USIA-06 OMB-01 TRSE-00 ACDA-07 IO-13 /076 W

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P R 030902Z JUN 77

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5. PRESS STILL CONTINUES TO SCOLD BOTH NDP AND DRP FOR NOT RUNNING CANDIDATES. MOST OBSERVERS CONCEDE DRP WAS SIMPLY AFRAID IT WOULD LOSE; DRP'S MIN PYONG-KI TOLD EMBOFF THAT DRP NEVER HAD ANY INTENTION OF RUNNING A CANDIDATE BUT WAITED UNTIL NDP HAS SAID IT TOO WOULD WITHDRAW. YI CHOL-SUNG CLAIMS HE WAS FORCED TO WITHDRAW BECAUSE CHONG IL-HYUNG REFUSED TO ALLOW NDP TO USE HIS PARTY APPARATUS; BY SUBSEQUENTLY ALLOWING HIS SON TO RUN AS INDEPENDENT CHUNG HAS INFURIATED YI. NDP'S HAN PYONG-CHOE HOWEVER, MAINTAINS DRP AND NDP LEADERSHIP MADE DEAL THAT BOTH WOULD DROP OUT.

6. PARTLY BECAUSE MAJOR PARTIES NOT INVOLVED, AND PARTLY BECAUSE OF SUBSTANTIAL PRESS AND PUBLIC APPEARANCE BLACKOUTS, SO FAR LITTLE EXCITEMENT HAS BEEN GENERATED, AND NEWSPAPERS ESTIMATE ONLY

50 PERCENT OF 173,000 ELIGIBLE VOTERS ARE EXPECTED TO PARTICIPATE. NONETHELESS, IT DOES APPEAR PEOPLE WILL HAVE CHOICE; MOREOVER, GIVEN BACKGROUND ON CANDIDATES AND EASY IDENTIFICATION WITH GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION VIEWS, OUTCOME MAY STILL GIVE AN INDICATION OF GOVERNMENT'S VS. OPPOSITION POPULARITY IN THIS KEY ELECTION DISTRICT IN HEART OF COUNTRY. THUS, WE EXPECT OUTCOME WILL BE READ CLOSELY FOR ITS POLITICAL SIGNS AND
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PORTENTS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTION CANDIDATES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 03-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977SEOUL04651
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770198-0254
Format: TEL
From: SEOUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770692/aaaadcwy.tel
Line Count: 177
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 3b4dc785-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 SEOUL 3402, 77 SEOUL 4330
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2285574
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SIXTEEN "INDEPENDENT" CANDIDATES TO RUN IN JUNE 10 BY -ELECTION
TAGS: PINT, KS
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/3b4dc785-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009